

before it paused, stood still, and then began its downward rush.

Durand had planned his descent so that it should carry him into the French lines. But to his horror a sudden breeze drove the parachute straight toward the inside of the fortress walls. And then, resigning himself to the inevitable, he devoted all his efforts toward saving his life, rather than attempting to gain the camp of the besiegers, which would mean an instant drop to death.

It was about a minute after he had pulled the cord of the valve when Durand dropped, unharmed, at the feet of the general in defense of Fort Gleichen.

But nobody noticed him, for all eyes were strained upward to where the great balloon came whirling down straight toward the fortress. Here Durand had not miscalculated. It fell true as an arrow, and the heat lightning played about it and—

Boom!

The most awful detonation that had ever been heard since war began filled the whole air with sound. A coil of cloud enveloped everything and shut out the sunlight. Slowly it drifted away. And every one knew what had occurred. The dirigible had been struck by lightning during its descent.

An instant later the sun disappeared. And suddenly, with the sound of a million bullets, hailstones the size of pigeons' eggs whizzed to the earth, followed by a drenching downpour.

Never had it rained as it rained that afternoon. The water fell in torrents. It was as though a million hoses were turned earthward from the heavens. In two minutes the camps were flooded. The streets of the beleaguered town ran water. Men flung themselves upon their faces and wallowed in the precious rain. From every house buckets, bath tubs, implements of every kind were outstretched to hold the life-giving water. The cisterns overflowed. The

besieged city was saved.

Durand stood before the general within the fortress. His hope had failed, by the interposition of the unexpected element, fate, which send so many schemes agley.

He expected death. He was not even in uniform—a hopeless, ragged ex-convict, bearing the stamp of shame upon his furrowed face.

The general turned to him. "Do you know what is going to happen to you?" he asked.

"A firing party, I suppose," Durand muttered.

"No," answered the general quietly. "You are going to make a balloon for us."

—o—o—
HE WAS INDICTED IN THE NEW HAVEN MESS.



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Ledyard specializes in corporations, both as a lawyer and as an investor. He's director in more than 50 corporations, including the American Express Company, U. S. Trust Company, Atlantic Mutual Insurance Company, Northern Pacific Railroad and the American Telegraph & Telephone Company.